

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (currently amended) A system for communicating variable data between a data management system and a document production system comprising:

a data management system having a data manager for obtaining variable data from a database;

a document production system for composing documents containing the variable data obtained from the database, the document production system including:

a document input station configured to generate a soft document in accordance with an input document;

a document composition engine being configured to generate a document layout in accordance with the soft document;

a document designing station configured to enable proofing and modification of the document layout;

a layout processor configured to generate at least one document in accordance with the document layout, the at least one document being populated with the variable data and being formatted for printing; and

a printer configured to print the at least one document; and

a message bridge for coupling the data management system to the document production system so that the document production system and data management system communicate data messages for the proofing and

generation of the at least one document ~~documents~~ populated with the variable data.

2. (original) The system of claim 1, the message bridge further comprising:

a transport adapter for collecting and converting variable data elements into data messages for transmission to the document composition engine.

3. (original) The system of claim 2, the transport adapter further comprising:

a plurality of transport adapter components, some of the transport adapter components collecting variable data and other transport adapter components converting the collected variable data into data messages for transmission to the document production system.

4. (original) The system of claim 2, the transport adapter further comprising:

at least one transport adapter component for receiving document production system messages containing data from the document production system.

5. (canceled)

6. (original) The system of claim 4, the document production system messages including:

document production system status messages.

7. (original) The system of claim 4, the document production system messages including:

queries for variable data from the data management system.

8. (original) The system of claim 2, the message bridge further comprising:

a Web server having transport adapter components for communicating with the document production system.

9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) A method for communicating between a document production system and a data management system comprising:

generating a document layout at a document input station of a document production system, the document layout being generated in accordance with a soft document;

receiving the document layout at a document designer station of the document production system, the document designer station being configured to enable the proofing and modification of the document layout;

obtaining variable data from a database in a data management system;

generating at least one document in accordance with the proofed document layout at a layout processor of the document production system, the at least one document including the variable data; and

printing the at least one document at a printer of the document production system; and

coupling the data management system to ~~a document~~ the document production system through a message bridge so that the document production system and data management system communicate.

11. (original) The method of claim 10, the obtaining of the variable data further comprising:

collecting and converting variable data into data messages for transmission to the document production system.

12. (original) The method of claim 11, further comprising:

receiving document production messages containing data from the document production system.

13. (canceled)

14. (original) The method of claim 12, the document production system message reception including:

receiving document production system status messages.

15. (original) The method of claim 12, the document production system message reception including:

receiving queries for variable data from the data management system.

16. (original) The method of claim 11 further comprising:

communicating the data messages with transport adapter components in  
a Web server.

17. (canceled)